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DOD & NRO REVIEWS COMPLETED

4 August 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

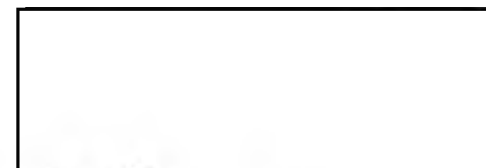
SUBJECT: Conversation with Mr. Vance on the NRO.

1. I called on Mr. Vance at his invitation at 0915 hours, 4 August 1965, to discuss the proposed agreement on the NRO. I had with me the copy of the amended draft which purported to be the final Defense Department draft which had been sent to CIA the previous day. It turned out that this was an earlier draft which they had not intended to send over and which was far more restrictive of CIA's activities than the one which they had intended to submit. Accordingly, we talked about the attached draft which had been amended in some respects by Mr. Vance to reflect his very strong opinion that the Secretary of Defense must be identified as having the final responsibility for the management of the entire NRP.

2. During a rather long discussion we reviewed the various reasons why CIA should continue as an active participant in the R&D aspects of the reconnaissance program. These arguments were based on the achievements of the past (I identified the U-2, OXCART, CORONA , the relative economy of production under CIA sponsorship (I referred to Kelly Johnson's arguments on this score), and finally, and most important, the importance of having an agency of the Government involved which is exclusively intelligence oriented. Mr. Vance agreed with all this. He also agreed with the proposition that it is necessary to give the component of CIA concerned with R&D matters enough authority and enough to do by way of specifically assigned projects to attract or retain personnel of appropriate caliber and experience.

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3. We discussed the role of the Secretary of Defense who, Mr. Vance insists, must have the "ultimate" managerial responsibility. I said that it did not seem unreasonable to give the Secretary of Defense the final say on basic policy matters under circumstances which ensured full consideration of the views of the DCI (and presumably also Dr. Hornig). I said that what we were concerned about was the inclusion of language which constitutes, or appears to constitute, authority to the DNRO to take actions or make decisions which had the effect of excluding CIA from its proper role in the program. I pointed out that what we were basically concerned with was the interference by a subordinate official of the Defense Department with the management of programs which had been made the responsibility of a subordinate element of CIA. In this connection, Mr. Vance said that he did not feel strongly about having the DNRO a member of the Executive Committee. On the other hand, he does feel strongly about the language in the agreement which provides that the DNRO (subject to the control of the Secretary of Defense and the guidance of the Executive Committee) "shall have the responsibility for managing the NRO and executing the NRP." Mr. Vance pointed out that the words were carefully chosen and that while the DNRO "manages the NRO," he merely "executes the NRP." This led to a discussion of what "executes" means with no very satisfactory results.

4. I finally said that the crux of the matter appeared to me to provide CIA with some form of guarantee of responsibility for specific project activity. I said that no language that I could think of would completely satisfy either the Secretary of Defense or the elements of CIA immediately concerned. I suggested therefore that consideration be given to a specific agreement allocating responsibility for the development and/or operational control of existing projects (whether in the operational or exploratory design phase). Specifically, I suggested that CIA be given (in addition to ongoing projects including CORONA improvement and the U-2), responsibility for whatever new general search system is developed/

specifically OXCART one way or another.

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5. I said that my discussions with Dr. Fubini had been based on the following considerations. The Air Force and the Pentagon generally have charged that CIA wants nothing less than control of the entire space system. CIA, on the other hand, has every reason to believe that the Air Force has carried on a ruthless and consistent campaign calculated to exclude CIA from any participation in the systems development phase (or probably any phase) of the NRP. I specifically referred to the fact that [redacted] had warned me as early as December 1962 that such a campaign was underway and that I had to judge later developments in the light of this prediction. The wording proposed by Fubini in paragraph Dld. reserves to the Air Force responsibility for development of spacecraft, boosters, and reentry vehicles. This seemed to me to be calculated to reassure the Air Force about CIA's ambitions in space and (in a rational world) legitimate. As a corollary it seemed to me CIA's responsibility for the development of sensors should be recognized with a further qualification that language in the agreement would be included to try to make sure the Air Force would not abuse its authority in the spacecraft development area in order to frustrate CIA's programs for the development of sensors.

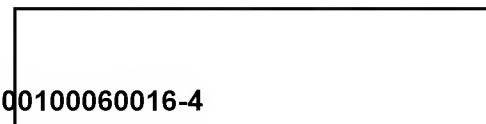
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6. Mr. Vance agreed with this and undertook to consider the allocation of project responsibility, including the allocation to CIA of responsibility for [redacted] the new general search system.

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7. At this point he asked Dr. Brown to join us and there was a general recapitulation of the problem. Dr. Brown agreed that CIA should be given a clear-cut franchise and enough latitude to carry out its commitments without undue interference. On the other hand, he felt that the DNRO should be kept fully informed of all developments and should participate in certain decisions. He agreed that it would be difficult to define the precise extent of his involvement in managerial questions and he professed to be fully aware of the "problem" of "going through the wall." He said

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that the experiences of the past two years had conditioned attitudes in the Pentagon and that it might be difficult to establish an effective working relationship. He said that Dr. Flax is objective but somewhat prejudiced against CIA by the versions which has reached him of the events of the last two years.

8. I said that it seemed to me at least likely that no arrangement that could be devised which involved a continuation of CIA in the research and development phase of the NRP would work. I suggested that perhaps we should back off and look for some entirely different form of relationship. This might involve the exercise of control over funds expended under the DCI's authority of Public Law 110 or some other method of assuring that reconnaissance programs are developed with intelligence objectives primarily in mind and are effective and responsive to intelligence requirements. Mr. Vance said that he felt very strongly that we should attempt to make this agreement work and that he was most reluctant to consider alternative arrangements at this time.

9. He undertook to talk to Mr. McNamara this evening and recommend the allocation of program responsibility which we had discussed.

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